"Once Again, I'll say it … Be Careful of Screwing With Mother Nature, Bob! Jimmy. Bill. George. … she bites!" famous drhall saying.

"Shore up what nature gave you, with those pitiful artificial replacements. The shore-ing up will only give you artificial
results." another famous drhall saying.

Now, "Louisiana 1927" will propel
Randy Newman into the White
House … like egg on your face.

Here is Joel K. Bourne snippet from the original 2004 National
Geographic article …

Campo settles into a worn recliner, his pale blue eyes the color of a late autumn sky. Our conversation turns from Mr. Go to the bigger issue affecting the entire coast. "What really screwed up the marsh is when they put the levees on the river," Campo says, over the noise of a groaning air-conditioner. "They should take the levees out and let the water run; that's what built the land. But we know they not going to let the river run again, so there's no solution."

Denise Reed, however, proposes doing just that—letting the river run. A coastal geomorphologist at the University of New Orleans, Reed is convinced that breaching the levees with a series of gated spillways would pump new life into the dying marshes. Only three such diversions currently operate in the state. I catch up with Reed at the most controversial of the lot—a 26-million-dollar culvert just south of New Orleans named Caernarvon.

"Caernarvon is a prototype, a demonstration of a technique," says Reed as we motor down a muddy canal in a state boat. The diversion isn't filling the marsh with sediments on a grand scale, she says. But the effect of the added river water—loaded as it is with fertilizer from farm runoff—is plain to see. "It turns wetlands hanging on by the fingernails into something quite lush," says Reed.

To prove her point, she points to banks crowded with slender willows, rafts of lily pads, and a wide shallow pond that is no longer land, no longer liquid. More like chocolate pudding. But impressive as the recovering marsh is, its scale seems dwarfed by the size of the problem.

"Restoration is not trying to make the coast look like a map of 1956," explains Reed. "That's not even possible. The goal is to restore healthy natural processes, then live with what you get."

Even that will be hard to do. Caernarvon, for instance, became a political land mine when releases of fresh water timed to mimic spring floods wiped out the beds of nearby oyster farmers. The oystermen sued, and last year a sympathetic judge awarded them a staggering 1.3 billion dollars. The case threw a major speed bump into restoration efforts.

Other restoration methods—such as rebuilding marshes with dredge spoil and salt-tolerant plants or trying to stabilize a shoreline that's eroding 30 feet (10 meters) a year—have had limited success. Despite the challenges, the thought of doing nothing is hard for most southern Louisianans to swallow. Computer models that project land loss for the next 50 years show the coast and interior marsh dissolving as if splattered with acid, leaving only skeletal remnants. Outlying towns such as Shell Beach, Venice, Grand Isle, and Cocodrie vanish under a sea of blue pixels.

Those who believe diversions are the key to saving Louisiana's coast often point to the granddaddy of them all: the Atchafalaya River. The major distributary of the Mississippi River, the Atchafalaya, if left alone, would soon be the Mississippi River, capturing most of its flow. But to prevent salt water from creeping farther up the Mississippi and spoiling the water supply of nearby towns and industries, the Corps of Engineers allows only a third of the Mississippi's water to flow down the Atchafalaya. Still, that water and sediment have produced the healthiest wetlands in Louisiana. The Atchafalaya Delta is one of the few places in the state that's actually gaining ground instead of losing it.

Morton, now with the U.S. Geological Survey, noticed that the highest rates of wetland loss occurred during or just after the period of peak oil and gas production in the 1970s and early 1980s. After much study, Morton concluded that the removal of millions of barrels of oil, trillions of cubic feet of natural gas, and tens of millions of barrels of saline formation water lying with the petroleum deposits caused a drop in subsurface pressure—a theory known as regional depressurization. That led nearby underground faults to slip and the land above them to slump.

"When you stick a straw in a soda and suck on it, everything goes down," Morton explains. "That's very simplified, but you get the idea." The phenomenon isn't new: It was first documented in Texas in 1926 and has been reported in other oil-producing areas such as the North Sea and Lake Maracaibo in Venezuela. Morton won't speculate on what percentage of wetland loss can be pinned on the oil industry. "What I can tell you is that much of the loss between Bayou Lafourche and Bayou Terrebonne was caused by induced subsidence from oil and gas withdrawal. The wetlands are still there, they're just underwater." The area Morton refers to, part of the Barataria-Terrebonne estuary, has one of the highest rates of wetland loss in the state.

Well, this could be the basis for a song. In fact, bring on R. Newman.

So, nobody was aware this could happen huh? Such lies and money petroleum based hypocrisy.

Newman, who sings about racism, greed, and emotional cruelty, never completely disappeared, however. He is in full effect on his last nonsoundtrack album, 1999's *Bad Love*, an unjustly neglected disc that radiates angry wit. Newman proudly referred to *Bad Love* as possibly his best album, and performed a half-dozen songs from it, including: "The Great Nations of Europe," a bleakly humorous two-and-a-half-minute history lesson on Western imperialism; "I'm Dead (but I Don't Know It)," an audience sing-along about an aging rocker unable to face the fact that he's grown stale and useless; and "The World Isn't Fair," in which a Newmanesque

antihero (a “froggish” older man with a young wife) explains to Karl Marx why communism failed. He even pokes at his own life. “I Miss You” is a love song to his first wife, written while very married to his second. Brave, cruel or simply hogwash is anybody’s guess.